

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, EGEN, EEC
SUBJECT: FRENCH LABELLING LAW

REF: (A) PARIS 5711, (B) STATE 81733, (C) EC BRUSSELS 528

1. ACCORDING TO COMMISSION OFFICIALS, MANY INDUSTRIALISTS AND SOME MEMBER STATES HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER FRENCH LABELLING LAW, BUT NO OFFICIAL COMPLAINT HAS BEEN REGISTERED FROM MEMBER STATES. DANISH PERMREP SOURCE HAS TOLD THE MISSION THAT THE DANISH FEDERATION OF INDUSTRIES APPROACHED THE COMMISSION LAST FALL TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THE FRENCH LABELLING LAW BUT THE DANISH GOVERNMENT HAS NO PLANS TO MAKE AN OFFICIAL COMPLAINT (REF. B).

2. DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR INDUSTRIAL AND INTERNAL MARKET AFFAIRS, FERNAND BRAUN, HAS SENT LETTER TO THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT EXPRESSING COMMISSION CONCERN THAT THE LAW MIGHT BECOME A BARRIER TO INTRA-COMMUNITY TRADE (REF. C). AS A RESULT OF THIS LETTER, GOF OFFICIAL MADE VISIT TO BRUSSELS RECENTLY TO ASSURE COMMISSION OFFICIALS THAT LAW WOULD NOT DISTORT TRADE. FRENCH REPORTEDLY TOLD

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COMMISSION THAT APPLICATION OF THE LAW WOULD BE DIRECTED TO CONSUMER LEVEL, AND NOT WHOLESALER, IMPORTER, DISTRIBUTOR OR TRANSACTIONS WITH SUBSIDIARIES, AND THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE REASONABLE IN INTERPRETING CONSUMER PROTECTION, E.G., SWITCHES COULD BE MARKED IN LANGUAGE OTHER THAN FRENCH AS LONG AS INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING SWITCHES WERE CLEARLY MARKED AND IN FRENCH.

3. COMMISSION OFFICIALS SEEM SATISFIED WITH FRENCH EXPLANATIONS, BUT THEY HAVE TOLD CONCERNED BUSINESSMEN THAT THEY WILL PURSUE VIGOROUSLY ANY SPECIFIC CASES OF TRADE DISTORTION BROUGHT TO THE COMMISSION'S ATTENTION.

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Message Attributes

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